Import of Bitumen by PSUs

2578. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report appeared in the Business Standard dated 5th September, 1998 under the caption 'Oil PSUs against Bitumen import';

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government to the observation made in the report and facts of the matter;

(c) the details of action taken/proposed in this regard; and

(d) what is the present status of the import proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR); (a) to (d) The news report, interalia, stated reduction in price of bitumen by public sector oil companies to discourage import of bitumen by private importer and reported ambiguity about the import policy. The price of bitumen has been deregulated effective 1.4.1998. Oil Companies are free to fix the selling price of the product to the customers as per market considerations. As per the existing Exim Policy, import of Bitumen (asphalt-paving grade) is canalised through Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.

LPG facilities in Karnataka

2579. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether rural areas in Karnataka are covered by LPG facilities by public sector oil companies; if so, the number of villages so covered as on 28th February, 1999;

(b) whether Government propose to cover more villages by providing LPG facility during the current year; and

(c) if so, the number of villages to be provided this facility and the names of districts under whose jurisdiction these are located?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : (a) to (c) Due to limited availability of LPG from indigenous sources and possible imports, so far the existing marketing plans for LPG have been made mainly covering towns having a population of 20,000 and above. However, LPG has been introduced in certain environmentally fragile areas and hilly areas below 20,000 population also to protect the environment and prevent deforestation.

With the increasing non-availability of traditional fuels higher availability of LPG and increasing popularity of LPG as cooking fuel due to its convenience in use and to prevent further deforestation, the Government has decided to commence marketing of LPG in the rural areas also. For the purpose of undertaking enrolment in the rural areas, Industry has formulated the revised 1996-98 Marketing Plan taking into account the following:

(i) To cover all urban locations with a population of 10,000 and above by including potential of adjoining villages falling within the radius of 15 Kms.

(ii) All urban locations having population of 5000 and above should be surveyed for setting up of distributorship and the viability to be ascertained by taking into account the potential of adjoining village falling within 15 Kms. radius.

(iii) Cluster of villages within 15 Kms. radius of nucleus village shaving a population of 10,000 and above, to be surveyed for setting up rural distributorship and included in the Plan depending upon the viability.

(iv) Villages within 15 Kms. radius around towns having population of 1 lakh and above to be surveyed for opening of rural distributorships. While identifying rural locations contiguous to these towns, it should be ensured that adequate number of LPG distributorships exist in such towns so as to avoid marketing of LPG by rural distri-butorships in urban areas.

(v) All VIP references should be surveyed for development of LPG distributorships by including the potential of adjoining villages falling within the radius of 15 Kms.